

COURT INVESTIGATOR

DEFINITION

Under direction, conducts civil investigations of conservatorships and guardianships; writes reports for the Probate Court based on findings; provides recommendations to Judicial Officer; and performs other related duties as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Positions in this class are characterized by the responsibility to independently collect and document evidence to be used for appointing conservators and guardians, prosecuting cases where fraud is suspected and providing detailed reports to the Court on facts of each case.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

1. Reviews case information regarding guardianship and conservatorship including petitions, questionnaires, minute orders and other supporting documents.
2. Conducts field visits to interview often confused/distraught individuals and assesses living conditions, financial and health status; reviews financial and medical records; investigates complaints regarding physical and/or financial abuse; arranges for interviews of parties outside the Southern California area.
3. Gathers information from various agencies during investigations; collects information from employers, schools, Family Court Mediators, Child Protective Services and other professionals; obtains criminal records from Sheriff's department.
4. Recommends judicial action on suitability of existing or potential conservators, guardians and placement; prepares recommendations and presents them in written and verbal form; prepares memos and special reports to Court on non-contested cases.
5. Informs concerned parties of laws, regulations, and procedures of the Court; explains scope of services and legal rights to clients; assists in the completion and submission of legal forms.
6. Provides information on the nature of conservatorship and guardianship proceedings to families, general public and attorneys.

7. Performs related duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in psychology, social work, or other behavioral science and two years of investigations/field interviewing experience that included responsibility for fact-finding or any combination of training and/or experience that could likely provide the desired knowledge and abilities. Experience working with elderly and developmentally disabled is highly desirable.

Knowledge of

Legal terminology, documents, and procedures pertaining to case evaluation and processing; laws, legal/judicial procedure and local rules relating to evaluation of assigned cases; issues and circumstances typical of assignment area; medical/psychiatric terms and conditions; interviewing and investigation techniques; report writing techniques; basic types of business investments; correct use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Ability to

Interact effectively with a wide variety of individuals from diverse backgrounds and educational levels who may be experiencing emotional stress, and/or mental and/or physical impairments; explain legal rights and court procedures; obtain needed information through interviewing and investigation; determine acceptability of legal documents for filing; examine and determine if the contents of probate files are consistent with statutory procedural requirements; recognize and respect limits of authority; identify need for judicial action and substantiate cause of action; formulate and present sound recommendations; present results of investigations orally and in writing; understand, interpret, and apply pertinent provisions of laws and local court rules governing area of assignment; write clear and comprehensive reports; complete assigned activities within time frames, organizing priorities and tasks with minimum supervision and direction; travel regularly by automobile and for long periods of time.

Special Requirements

A California driver's license requirement will be reviewed on a position basis in accordance with ADA regulations.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Strength, dexterity, coordination and vision to use a keyboard and video display terminal on a daily basis. Hearing to communicate with the public and court staff. Dexterity and coordination to handle files and single pieces of paper; occasional lifting of objects weighing up to 25 lbs. such as files, stacks of papers, reference and other materials. Moving from place to place within an office; some reaching for items above and below desk level.

Date Est. 4/00